1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

the water thinking it was a fish, only to find afterwards that it was the shadow of a heron above. When the actors discover their mistake they say, "Boys, no telling in the village, lest we be laughed at into the bargain."

Old Age

It is commonly asserted that Fijians age more quickly than Europeans, but I know of no proof. Salesi knew his exact age: it was forty-three, and he looked about that age. Ratu Finau did not look older than his age, which was forty-one or forty-two. Joshua was said to be much older than either, yet he did not look quite fifty. Malani must have been about eighty, at least seventy-five, to remember the events he did; Tui Tumbou was older but better preserved and still worked in the fields.

Old men still enjoy some prestige, though not as much as formerly. They do not count as much in a bureaucratic government, which prefers young men because they understand clerical work. Schooling also puffs up the young with conceit of their knowledge and makes them despise the culture of the old. The oldest man says, "They used to fear the anger of old men; now they despise them because of Christianity. They used to say if a man despises the words of an old man he will not prosper, he will not steer straight so as to make land anywhere. If a man despises the words of his father, and after a short time falls ill, they say, 'Why did you despise your father's words?' "

Nevertheless, old men are still feared. One of the young generation, about seventeen, said to me, "Fijians fear the abuse (*vosa tha*) and prohibitions (*vosa surui*) of an old man. If a man wants to do something and the old man tells him not to, it is no use doing it; it does not prosper."

Curses and Oaths

I tried in vain to discover a word for a curse; one informant suggested a Tongan word, but did not know of any in Fijian. The conclusion is there is no distinction between curses and abuse; both are called "to speak evil," "to use bad language" (*vosa tha*). If an old man spoke evil or used bad language (*vosa vakathathataka*) to a man, that man was despised; if men's children were impudent the old people said evil of them.

Ordinary abuse is also known as evil speech, bad language. "If bad language is uttered in jest," says one, "we put up with it; but if in anger (*yalo tha*), we go straight to court."

10:St. Johnston G-5 (no date) 1918
OQ6 Lau OQ6

754 Jonetani having earned princely fees (for a short time) by walking about and feeling "by a peculiar sensation of warmth to his feet" where charms had been buried under the houses of sick people —he having placed them there beforehand.

Lastly, there is the potable antidote, called either *vakadranu* or *vakasili*, which, if administered by one skilled in such magic, inevitably drives the *vakadraudrau* away.

It is only right that, as long as the superstition still remains among the people, transactions in magic of any kind should be dealt with in the criminal courts, as among a primitive people even the idea that some one might have *vakadraudrau'd* them may be enough to cause death by auto-suggestion. In fact, that is the most natural explanation of most of the deaths that have occurred. A man has probably been suffering from some mild illness, he gets the idea of *vakadraudrau* into his head (which his relatives do not by any means try to dispel), and it so preys upon him that he gives up "the wish to live," and turns his face to the wall and dies. For this [683] reason people when convicted of these practices were, and still are, severely dealt with, even the milder law of to-day allowing a sentence of six months and twenty-four lashes.

754 184 Now, all the instances I have mentioned above occurred in northern Lau (in other words, those